

Message Text

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CANBERRA 14 APR 77 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 4724

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (WOLFF, LESTER)
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CONGRESSMAN GOODLING TO EAST TIMOR

1. CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM GOODLING BECAME THE FIRST AMERICAN
CONGRESSMAN TO VISIT EAST TIMOR SINCE ITS INTEBRATION
WITH INDONESIA WHEN HE LANDED AT DILI ON THE AFTERNOON
OF APRIL 10.

2. DURING HIS TWO-DAY STAY IN EAST TIMOR, THE CONGRESSMAN
VISITED THREE REGENCIES, IN ADDITION TO DILI; MET
BRIEFLY WITH THE INDONESIA MILITARY COMMANDER OF EAST
TIMOR, BRIG. GEN. DADING; HAD EXTENSIVE CONVERSATIONS
WITH THE VICE-GOVERNOR (AND ACTING GOVERNOR) OF EAST
TIMOR, FRANCISCO XAVIER LOPEZ DA CRUZ, AND CALLED ON
THE BISHOP OF DILI, BISHOP REBIERO. HE ALSO HAD THE
OPPORTUNITY FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERN-
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PAGE 02 STATE 086005

MENT (ALL TIMORESE) AND MILITARY OFFICIALS AND HELD
PUBLIC QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSIONS AT ALL STOPS WITH
COMMUNITY LEADERS, PROMINENTLY INCLUDING FOREIGN CATHOLIC
MISSIONARIES IN BAUCAU AND BOBONARO. CONGRESSMAN
GOODLING WAS GREETED BY LARGE CROWDS WHEREVER HE WENT.

3. IN HIS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENTS, CONGRESSMAN

GOODLING EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WAS TO GATHER INFORMATION, FIRST-HAND, ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN TIMOR, AND TO GET A BALANCED ACCOUNT OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE TIMORESE CIVIL WAR AND INDONESIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN TIMOR, ESPECIALLY ON THE MATTER OF "ATROCITIES." HE FURTHER EXPLAINED, WHERE THE POLITICAL SOPHISTICATION OF HIS AUDIENCE PERMITTED, CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN THE USE OF U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN TIMOR AND DISCUSSED THE ACTIVITIES AND CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY OF JAMES DUNN.

4. INDONESIAN OFFICIALS NOTABLY THE VICE-GOVERNOR, STRESSED THAT THE SECURITY SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR WAS GOOD, WITH ONLY SCATTERED REMNANTS OF FRETILIN OPERATING IN SEVERAL MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS IN THE CENTER OF THE PROVINCE. THEY CAUTIOUSLY ADMITTED THAT INDONESIAN "EXCESSES" AND "ERRORS" HAD OCCURRED, BUT CONSISTENTLY STRESSED THAT FRETILIN TERROR HAD BEEN MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE AND, MOREOVER, HAD THE SANCTION OF THE FRETILIN LEADERSHIP AS AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF FRETILIN POLICY (A POINT CONFIRMED BY BISHOP REBIERO).

5. COMMUNITY LEADERS, NOTABLY THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES, WERE LESS SANGUINE ABOUT THE SECURITY SITUATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE INTERIOR, AND SPOKE OF MORE FRETILIN ACTIVITY. THEY CONCURRED, HOWEVER, THAT GOVERNMENT SECURITY IN THE POPULATED AREAS WAS EFFECTIVE.

6. THE MISSIONARIES DESCRIBED THE ATROCITIES AS THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 086005

INEVITABLE RESULT OF CIVIL WAR AND NOTED THAT BOTH SIDES SHARED THE BLAME. THOUGH THEY GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED THE WORST EXCESSES TO THE FRETILIN, THEY WERE LESS CATEGORICAL ON THIS QUESTION THAN THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. BISHOP REBIERO AND A YOUNG ITALIAN PRIEST IN BAUCAU SPOKE WITH PARTICULAR EFFECT OF THE NEED TO LEAVE BEHIND THE TRAGEDY OF THE PAST AND DO WHAT PRACTICALLY COULD BE DONE TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF TIMOR.

7. THE CONGRESSMAN WAS ACCOMPANIED THROUGHOUT HIS TRIP BY INDONESIAN OFFICIALS. HIS SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WERE CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH, INDONESIAN (THROUGH AN EMBASSY ESCORT OFFICER) AND, MOSTLY, IN PORTUGUESE (THROUGH AN INDONESIAN INTERPRETER, WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER KNOWLEDGABLE IN PORTUGUESE MONITORING THE DISCUSSIONS).

8. CONGRESSMAN GOODLING HAS READ AND APPROVED THIS

TELEGRAM.

NEWSOM

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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